

A

REVIEW

OF THE

STATE

OF THE

BRITISH NATION.

Saturday, July 24. 1708.

I Gave you my Opinion in my last, and my Reasons for it, viz. That the Sum and Substance of this War lies in *Flanders*; and not to go back to the Particulars repeated then, I am not without Hopes, that this present Victory, if well push'd, and the Consternation of their Affairs rightly improv'd, may be a full Proof of my Argument; and tho' I have maintain'd it some Years against the receiv'd Opinion, yet I am perswaded, we are now come to a Testimony of it.

Would you beat the *French* off from the Banks of the *Rhine*, keep them from ravaging the *Palatinate*, ruining the Circle of *Swabia*, and crushing the Princes of the House of *Baden* and *Wurtemberg*? Beat them

but in *Flanders*, you shall see them call back even their whole Armies, and leave that side for a Prey to you, to defend the more dangerous Affair of an Irruption to the Gates of *Paris*.

Would you deliver the Duke of *Savoy*, and secure your Conquests in *Italy*? Beat but the *French* in *Flanders*, you will find the *French* reduced to the *Defensive* there; trusting to *Passes*, *Lines* and *Fortifications*, and more afraid of the little Duke of *Savoy*, than ever he was of the Duke *De Feuillade*, when he drove him from his Capital City to the Mountains of *Genoa*.

Would you reduce *Philip* of *Bourbon*, and set *Charles* of *Austria* upon the Throne of the *Spanish* Monarchy? Beat but the *French* in

in *Flanders*, which will oblige him to bring Home his Auxiliaries out of *Spain*, and you may e'en let the *Spaniards* alone to do the Work themselves:—And I must take the Freedom to say, had the Right of King *Charles* been only declar'd, and he had never set his Foot in *Spain*, but the Money, the Men, the Arms employ'd there, had from the Beginning been added to your Force in *Flanders*; I am persuaded, King *Charles* had been by this time quietly seated at *Madrid*.

But what need remote Arguments, we are now come to the Experiment; GOD has trusted us with another Victory in *Flanders*, a great Blow to the *French* it is, —and whether it is altogether so compleat, as that at *Romellies* or no, the Horse as they say being almost unbroken, yet it is such a Blow, as if rightly improv'd, may with GOD's Blessing end this War—And would GOD Almighty put it into the Hearts of the Princes of the Earth, rather to pursue Peace than Conquest, I cannot but persuade my self, this one Battle may bring us to the End of our Wishes, and we may once more see the Tranquillity of *Europe* establish'd; the weary Nations deliver'd from the Tyranny of Men, whose Lust and Cruelty have involved them in Blood and Confusion for twenty Years past, and that horrid, blasphemous and diabolical Delusion of the Divine Right of Personal Tyranny be trampled under Foot, by the general Consent of all the Christian Kingdoms of the World.

Nor could the greatest Success, our own Fancies could have projected in any other Part of the World, have had any thing like this Effect—A Battle on the *Rhine* or in *Spain*, had been as the Battles of *Blenheim* and *Turin* were, cutting off the Hair which in Time grows again; but a Battle in *Flanders* is cutting off a Leg or an Arm, which is never restor'd.

I must own, it is an unaccountable thing in the *French* General; and what the Duke of *Vendosme* will say for it, remains a Doubt with me—That he should suffer himself at such a Juncture as this to be drawn into an Engagement; he had by a fine Step or two got great Advantages; he had seiz'd upon

Ghent and *Bruges*, taken *Sword in Hand* the Fort of *Plassendael*, and thereby block'd up *Offend*, so that he had open'd the whole plain Country of *Flanders* to himself, and had quite chang'd the Face of Affairs in *Flanders*, and had gain'd the Reputation of a Politick Soldier, and a great General; and how he should be brought to put it to a day at last, what shall be said for it? —Where's my mad Man, what will he say to it, I wonder?

Mad Man. Not so far off, Sir, as you think; a mad Man is always pretty near the *Review*, you know; what's your Will with me, Sir?

Review. What is your Opinion of the Duke *De Vendosme*, pray, and this Action of his, in suffering himself to be drawn into a Battle?

M. My Opinion is, Sir, that he was, as I told you the World is, MAD. But what is that to the Purpose, I take both sides to be mad, and therefore my Opinion weighs not in this Case.

Rev. Is our Side mad too?

M. Ay, ay, mad, quite mad; I believe, the Duke of *M*——*gb* is as mad as any of them, and much madder than the Duke of *Vendosme*.

Rev. How do you prove that?

M. I'll prove it by a very ancient Author, whom I have in my Pocket.

Rev. Is it in Prose or Verse?

M. O, Sir, it is Verse; 'tis one of the ancient Poets, I assure you, commenting upon another; perhaps you may not have heard of him.

Rev. What is his Name, pray?

M. I know you love Names; I'll tell you then, it is CROCUS upon HINDERLANDS, Sir, an ancient *High German* Author, Sir; if you enquire among the Linen-Drapers in *Cornhill*, or the *Hambro'* Merchants, they are most of them acquainted with him—Well, Sir, and does he prove the Duke of *M*——*gb* to be mad? Ay, Sir, without Question, and madder than the Duke *De Vendosme*; I'll shew it you.

+ *Pompey was a mad Man, a mad Man, a mad Man,
Pompey was a mad Man, a mad Man was he ;
But Cæsar in Pharsalia routed his Basalia,
Because he was a madder Man, a madder far than he.*

+ Pulls out a Book, and sings.

'Tis plain, Sir, you see Fighting being down-right Madness, he that is maddest conquers of Course, and he that conquers is maddest of Course ; and so the Duke of M——gb is madder than the Duke of Vendosme, and therefore beats him, and you need not take this for an Affront to the Duke of M——gb, for it is just the contrary, it is the greatest Panegyrick on him a mad Man can make.

Rev. How do you make it out?

M. Very plain, Sir ; for the Duke of M——gb being madder than the Duke of Vendosme, signifies, that he is the fitter for a General ; and having beaten him according to the Song, because he was madder, i. e. as before, *because he is a better General*, so he shall always beat him for the same Reason.

Rev. This is mad arguing indeed, and you speak but under the Protection of your Lunacy.

M. I speak it honestly, and mean it so ; in my Sense it is our Advantage, add that great General's Honour to have him be the maddest Man upon Earth.

Rev. Well, but this is not to my Question yet——What think you of the *French* fighting, do you not think they were mad?

M. I think they were mad in beginning the War, and so every Action they have done since, is Part of the same Lunacy ; but as to this Fight, I do not so much reflect upon them, as You.

Rev. Why so?

M. Because Acts of Lunacy are generally voluntary, at least they seem so ; but 'tis plain, this was against their Wills.

Rev. But why were they brought to a Condition to be oblig'd to fight against their Wills?

M. Why, that was answer'd in *Cæsar* and *Pompey*, because the D. of M——b was madder, *Anglicè*, a better General than the Duke of Vendosme, and push'd him to a Necessity of

fighting, and that too with some Disadvantage ; You may go on with your WHY's to the End of the Chapter ; why did he let himself be brought to the Necessity of fighting, why did he march SO and not SO, here and not there, as every Step is examin'd, when a Man mistakes? Will you go ask a Gamester why he loses? Two things are commonly said to make a Man lose at Play ; 1. that his Antagonist is a better Gamester, or 2. ill Luck——That the Duke of M——gb is the better Gamester in this Play of the War, has been apparent enough ; as to what they call Luck at Play, or Fortune in the Case of War, I leave you to call it what you please, and talk of it by your self, it does not belong to my Class.

Rev. I know but one right Name for it, it is vulgarly call'd Chance or Fortune, Idols of Atheists, and Phantoms that have no Being——I know it by no other Name than Providence, and to it I am for reserving the whole moving Power of all these Affairs. And this has made me talk so much of the Want of our acknowledging the Sovereignty of Providence in the Conduct of the War, and in the giving or delaying Victory ; to which Neglect I charge the barbarous way we take with our Generals and Officers, putting them in GOD's Stead, and demanding Victory as absolutely of them, as *Rachel* demanded Children of her Husband *Jacob*, laying all the Negatives which are put upon our Prospects, at the Door of their Conduct ; charging all their Mistakes, and more than all upon their Integrity, and making them accountable for that which none but their Maker can give, and which their own Behaviour often provokes him to withhold.

If a General under these Circumstances has not the hardest Post of it, of any Man in the World, then I am mistaken ; I mean in *England*, for I find it so in no other Nation in